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Today, the study of regional and social dialects is offering valuable assistance to language teachers. Although studies comprehending all regions of the United States are still unrealized, linguistic geographers have undertaken comprehensive field studies of many regional language variations, making available (1) atlases describing the regional language variations in several parts of the country, (2) studies indicating vocabulary change and regional variations in grammar and pronunciation, (3) maps showing the frequency of distribution of language items, and (4) files of alphabetized lexical information on regional patterns. Because many Americans are handicapped by nonstandard varieties of English, the study of the social dialects of Negroes and other ethnic groups has recently assumed prominence. American dialectologists are also studying the language patterns of non-urban groups, giving special attention to language variations which correlate with age, education, and social class. (JB)

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EXPANDING FRONTIERS IN DIALECT STUDY

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At a time when men are about to take off into outer space and are exploring abysses of the sea, a new breed of linguists is following their example by probing so far into the deep structure of language they are already approaching the uncharted realm of innate ideas. But I take a certain comfort in knowing that there still are linguists who have both feet on the ground. I do not imply at all that they are the last leaves upon the tree, septuagenarian relics of an earlier age of scholarship. Far from it, for these particular linguists not only are busy pushing back the borders of their original area of concern, regional variations in language, but also are developing new concerns in a related territory, that of social variations. These linguists are the linguistic or dialect geographers--Hans Kurath has recently called them field linguists--interested in language in space, and those now called sociolinguists, who are concerned with language in social class.

It is trite to recall the unhappy fact that after the first generous grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, through the American Council of Learned Societies, to finance the pilot American dialect project in New England, money for this kind of research almost vanished. The Second World War, burgeoning demands for support of physical and social science research, and some other causes all led to a serious dearth of underwriting regional speech investigation in this country. Only small grants wheedled out of foundations and institutions kept sporadically alive the study that slowly built up the research files of the atlas projects of the Middle and South

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Atlantic states, the North Central region, the Upper Midwest, and the Pacific Coast. Never was a grant large enough to maintain a staff that could carry these major projects through to completion within a desirable period. The frontiers, once drawn, were barely maintained, much less expanded. One regrettable result was delay in full use of atlas findings in the classrooms of our schools and colleges.

Now, however, the situation is somewhat different; the picture brightens. Upon the recent retirement of Hans Kurath, who had directed the New England atlas and the fieldwork for the Middle and South Atlantic states, an agreement between the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago led to the transfer of the Atlantic records to the latter institution, which is supporting the editorial activity of Raven I. McDavid as the new director. He expects to have the first fasicle of the volume on the phonology of the Middle and South Atlantic states ready for the University of Chicago Press by September. One of his graduate students, Alan Perlman, is completing a master's thesis on the phonological rules for generating diphthongs in mid-western speech.

Furthermore, for the first time the federal government has done what European governments have been doing, as a matter of course, for years; that is, provide support for an atlas investigation. The National Endowment for the Humanities has given a grant to the Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest for editorial work upon the files that have lain dormant since the last dribble of funds dried up five years ago. This grant has released me from teaching this year, and I have a three-fourths time associate. We hope to have the first volume, that on the vocabulary, ready for the press a year from now.

The North Central atlas likewise has lain dormant for several years, but now that its director, Albert Marckwardt, is completing his duties as Council president, he expects to get at the editing job.

An agreement has been reached by which the Pacific Northwest atlas, formerly headquartered under Carroll Reed at the University of Washington, will be merged with the Pacific Coast atlas under David Reed, new director of the Commission on the English Language, at Berkeley. Reed is now editing the phonological data of the Pacific Coast records for publication. One of his doctoral students, he reports, is finishing a dissertation, A Word Geography of California and Nevada.

Two large-scale projects based upon mail questionnaires rather than upon field work are those of Rudolph Troike at Texas and Gordon Wood at Southern Illinois University. Troike is at work on a computer-prepared map to show the frequency distribution of language items reported on postcard questionnaires from throughout Texas. Wood writes that he has just sent to the printer the 200 pages of his study of vocabulary distribution in eight southern states: Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The title is Vocabulary Change: A Study of Variation in Regional Words. He also has completed, on a U.S. Office of Education grant, a smaller computational research study based on the spoken responses of 33 informants, mainly in Tennessee and Oklahoma, entitled Subregional Speech Variations in Vocabulary, Grammar, and Pronunciation.

Another smaller southern study is that of Nolan LeCompte, a graduate student of William Van Riper at Louisiana State University. It is called A Word Atlas of La Fourche Parish and Grand Isle, Louisiana. Other similar supplementary studies are now going on, such as Marvin Carmony's study of regional vocabulary in the speech of Vigo County High School seniors in Indiana, but there is no time to list more here.

There are still large areas of the United States in which actual field work is still to be undertaken--including the inner south, the three-block group comprising Missouri, Arkansas, and Kansas, and the states of Wyoming and Arizona, besides certain other states in which fragmentary beginnings have been made. Yet eventually we can hope that the dream of the original atlas planning conference back in 1928 will be realized--a full coverage of the United States and Canada. Only then will the geographical frontiers of dialect study have been pushed to their limit. Then the new Council publication by Roger Shuy, Discovering American Dialects, excellent as it is, will have to be replaced by a second edition or another book that will be even more useful to the classroom teacher of English.

Yet I must add that the current activity of the Dictionary of American Regional English is collecting a comprehensive file of lexical information that, while it will be presented in alphabetical form, will be available also for studies of regional patterns. Tomorrow afternoon its director, Frederic Cassidy of the University of Wisconsin, will be describing his project on the C 14 program. I suggest that you go to find out about the most unusual lexicographical project in history.

In the meantime, the frontiers of dialect study have been expanding in another direction, the vertical. This is the dimension that has been the original contribution of American linguistic geography to dialect research. The earlier European atlas studies were directed solely to the investigation of geographical differences in what has been called the folk-speech, the language typically used by rural and small-town residents without more than minimal formal education. Exploration of this lateral dimension, however, turned out to be inadequate in this country, with its socially mobile

population. The director of the New England atlas, Hans Kurath, determined at the outset that American dialectology should include also attention to variation correlating with age, education, and social class. That is why atlas fieldwork in this country calls for three kinds of informants, Type I, old-fashioned and uneducated, Type II, middle-aged with a high school education, and Type III, younger and college-educated.

Yet even when various language features were distributed differently among the three types, the emphasis in various atlas publications has been upon the geographical distribution. The social distinctions were secondary to the geographical matrix. But in 1948 Raven McDavid's article was an early straw in the wind of change. McDavid used dialect atlas evidence to reveal the social significance of the distribution of post-vocalic /r/ in South Carolina. Other straws were a few dialect studies of individual communities, notably two of New York city, in which social differences were importantly related to language features. Still another was an article by William Labov, in 1963, in which he reported a study of the speech of Martha's Vineyard that revealed what he considered the social motivation of a sound change.

Probably most important of all studies up until this year was Labov's own Columbia University doctoral dissertation, The Social Stratification of English in New York City. It can almost be called a cornerstone of what is now given its own distinctive name, the discipline of social dialectology or sociolinguistics. Labov's work has provided research design and procedures for several major and minor current investigations, and these in turn are being reflected in other studies that, while not necessarily using his design, are concerned with the same social dimension of dialect variation.

Unlike the geographical dimension, this vertical range of dialect research is attracting all kinds of money. The reason, of course, lies

in the sudden political awareness that millions of Americans cannot move into the Great Society because they are handicapped socially, educationally, and vocationally through their restriction to non-standard varieties of English. This lack of control of one of the Standard varieties is a characteristic of those variously classed as "underprivileged," "socially deprived," "socially disadvantaged," or, with happy euphemism, "culturally different."

Although there are still those persons who seem to advocate a ruthless replacement of the nonstandard variety by Standard, the weight of evidence from psychology and linguistics as well as from the related discipline of the teaching of English as a second language, argues rather that Standard English should be taught to these people as a second dialect without prejudice to their first dialect. The goal is addition, not substitution.

The first major study having this ultimate objective was that of McDavid and Alva Davis in Chicago on a grant from the United States Office of Education. Davis is now preparing a teacher's guide showing the contrasting speech patterns of Negro and white children. Lee Pederson's thesis on Negro speech characteristics in Chicago was based upon field work done for that project; and Pederson is now carrying on a somewhat similar study of the speech of Negro children in Atlanta, Georgia.

Another USOE-supported project has just been completed in Detroit under Roger Shuy. With eleven fieldworkers he collected 702 interviews with school children and their parents belonging to the wide range of ethnic groups in that city. The findings, appearing in the just published report, are clearly significant for pedagogical application in Detroit schools and elsewhere where similar problems exist.

Beginning September 1, Shuy became director of an already ongoing project, also USOE-financed, the major comprehensive investigation of the speech of Negro children in Washington, D. C. Preliminary findings of that

study, reported two years ago by William Stewart, chief investigator, have been used in teaching guides in schools and adult education centers.

Labov is also engaged in another major study, this one of the structure of English used by Negro and Puerto Rican speakers in New York city. A principal objective is to define those structural and functional conflicts between Standard English and the language of the Negro and Puerto Rican vernaculars that interfere with the acquisition of reading skills.

Smaller studies are too numerous to do more than suggest by mention of a few. At Minnesota Sister Mary Boesen, using field data collected by Lee Pederson two years ago, is studying the verb phrases of Minneapolis school children in the less privileged areas. Martha Jane Robert is analyzing the verb forms of Negroes in south central Louisiana. Rudolph Troike has had several graduate students working on Negro speech in Austin, Texas, and is conducting a survey of Negro speech in five east Texas communities. Ray O'Cain, one of McDavid's graduate students, is beginning an analysis of social dialects in Charleston speech. Here in Hawaii the Hilo Language Development Project, also under USOE, is working on linguistic analysis, materials preparation, and classroom experimentation with respect to the teaching of Standard English to speakers of the Hawaiian Island dialect. A descriptive report of the project appears in the November issue of Elementary English.

Linguistic research of any kind needs no justification other than man's curiosity about his most marvelous creation, language. But we need not be unhappy when knowledge gained along some of its expanding frontiers has pedagogical fringe benefits. Today we find not only that older study of regional dialects is offering valuable insights in teaching the language, but also that the study of social dialects is giving us perhaps even more valuable knowledge--more valuable because it is knowledge that can help to alleviate serious social injustice and open doors of opportunity to a better America.